

In the specification:

Please replace paragraph 26 with the following paragraph:

[26] Then, during the second polymerizing etch, a second polymeric film **33** is formed, which grows at a rate that depends upon the etching voltage  $V_E$ . According to embodiments of the invention, the etching voltage  $V_E$  is varied during the second polymerizing etch so as to control the growth of the second polymeric film **33** and thus the slope of the walls **35** of the trench **31**. In greater detail, the second polymerizing etch is performed in discrete steps and comprises a number  $N$  of steps performed in succession. As shown in **FIG. 17**, associated with the etching steps are respective durations  $T_1, T_2, \dots, T_N$  and respective increasing values  $V_{E1}, V_{E2}, \dots, V_{EN}$  of the etching voltage  $V_E$ . For example, the second polymerizing etch comprises three steps, each having a duration of 30 s. Furthermore, for each step the value of the etching voltage  $V_E$  is obtained by keeping the chamber voltage  $V_C$  constant (for example at 0 V) and imposing values of the wafer voltage  $V_W$  of 10 V, 20 V and 30 V, respectively. Thereby, a discrete-ramp etching voltage  $V_E$  is supplied. The etching steps are moreover performed one after the other, in rapid succession, substantially without interruptions.